

## **How do I discourage underage drinking at prom and during graduation parties?**

Both prom and graduation are milestones that should be celebrated. Unfortunately these are both times when teenagers are more likely to engage in risky behaviors including drinking alcohol. Risk can be reduced by following a few guidelines. Communication is key. Talk with your teenager regarding why you do not want them to drink and implement rules with specific consequences for drinking. Discuss with your teen that this is an issue about making smart choices and relay that you trust them to do so. Find out who your teen will be attending the event with and talk with other parents to ensure that the rules for drinking are the same and that the plans being relayed are consistent. Encourage your teen to participate in community or school sponsored after prom programs.

Parents hosting parties for teens should provide safe, alcohol-free activities for those in attendance and should be present to supervise any party occurring in your home. Some parents believe that allowing teenagers to drink under their supervision is appropriate because they plan to take away the youth's car keys. This is a mistake. Alcohol related accidents such as falling, drowning, illness and suicide can still occur and involve many teenagers every year. Underage drinking is not only unsafe and unhealthy, it is illegal. Parental involvement is a must toward providing safe prom and graduation activities.